



## The Declaration

Jefferson Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS)

Fall Edition 2017

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### Upcoming Member Meetings

-- Kate Asquith



Mark your calendars for our fall lineup of speakers. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Bldg., 1780 Earlysville Rd. just south of Woodlands Rd. intersection on north side of Charlottesville, VA unless otherwise noted. Bring a friend or two, visitors are welcome.

**Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> – Creating a Meadow** - Join Geoff Shaw who will talk about how a landowner can create a native meadow in their own yard. Geoff will cover lessons learned from his experience earned as a Project Coordinator for J.W. Townsend Landscapes. He will address soil preparation, seeding, species selection, and some funding options. Geoff originally hails from Maine and holds a degree in Agribusiness and Resource Management from the University of Maine in Orono. Since moving to Charlottesville in 2004, he has worked on and managed fine properties and estates throughout Albemarle County. Geoff has a class A CDL, is a VNLA certified horticulturist and holds a pesticide applicator certification. Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville)



### **Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> – Tiny Critters Doing a Big Job: The Importance of Insect Pollinators in our**



**Ecosystem** - Join our chapter president, Mary Lee Epps as she presents “Tiny Critters Doing a Big Job: the Importance of Insect Pollinators in our Ecosystem.” She’ll talk about different ways pollination can occur, but with a particular focus on insect pollination. Bees, moths, butterflies, wasps, flies and beetles all can play a role in moving pollen from plant to plant, but bees are by far the best equipped for the job and we’ll find out why. She’ll also briefly discuss the various threats to pollinators and finally she’ll give some pointers on designing a pollinator-friendly garden. Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville)

**Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> – Park Service will be talking about the after effects of the fire in SNP-** Details to follow but mark your calendars!!! Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville)



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### **Plant Sale 2018 Preparation: Fall Potting Party at Pat’s**

*--Phil Stokes*



Your help is needed! The most essential step in preparing for the chapter’s Annual Native Plant Sale (Apr. 29, 2018) is the potting of 100’s of bare root spring ephemerals and later season wildflower plugs. On Saturday Oct. 7 enjoy a wonderful fall morning with friends potting plant sale favorites including bluebells, trilliums, wild ginger, ferns, milkweed, goldenrods, and asters.

No experience necessary. We’ll have the comfort of a greenhouse if rainy. All the plants, soil, pots, trays, and labels will be provided. But do bring your extra pots with 4” openings to reduce our future needs to purchase pots.

Potting starts 10:00 at Pat Willis’s welcoming home in Louisa County’s scenic Green Spring countryside. With a good turnout all the plants will be potted by lunchtime when we’ll be rewarded with Pat’s delectable soups. You may bring a dish to share too. Drinks will be provided. Please come, the more the merrier!

Directions: Rural area address 1611 Hamilton Rd., Louisa, VA 23093, ph. 540 967-0208

- From I-64 Zion Crossroad Exit (Route 15) go north on Route 15 for 3 ½ mi.
- Turn right onto Jack Jouett Rd.
- Go 1.5 miles (Jack Jouett Rd. veers to the right at a T-intersection)
- Make a left onto Hamilton Rd.
- Go 1.6 mi., immediately after you cross the steel truss bridge Pat’s steep uphill driveway is on your left, mailbox numbered 1611 at driveway

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## Plant Sale Spring 2017 Results

--Phil Stokes

Thank you to our many volunteers and loyal customers who made the Jefferson Chapter's April 30 Annual Native Plant Sale at Ivy Ck. a huge success! All your hard work produced exceptional sales of nearly \$6,600, a little less than last year's sale. Although not a total sell out, we did well considering the unusually hot weather and fewer number of member contributed plants received.

With a very helpful group of volunteers on Sat. and Sun. we stocked the barn with over 2,000 labeled native plants, helped customers find their favorites to purchase, and finished barn sweep and putting exhibits back in place by an hour after the sale ended. Most of the unsold full season perennials which would require considerable care and could become root-bound by next spring were donated to Camp Holiday Trails for landscaping there, Marjie arranged this. The Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards took the woody leftovers. The unsold ephemerals and shade plants that would require little care are being carried over to next year's sale and will likely benefits from the additional year of growth.

Profits from the plant sale will benefit Ivy Creek Natural Area, Nature Camp, Piedmont Landscape Assoc. Seminar native flora advocating speakers, and other education/conservation efforts.

Enjoyed working with you and hope to have your support for next year's sale on April 29, 2018. We will begin by having a potting event at Pat Willis's on Oct. 7. To improve our sale please provide your recommendations of plant species that you would like to see added. Send requests to Phil Stokes (Plant Sale Chairman) at [philipfs@embargmail.com](mailto:philipfs@embargmail.com).

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## Ivy Creek's Butterfly Garden

--Tana Herndon

If you've recently walked around the Education Building at the Ivy Creek Natural Area, you may have noticed changes to the butterfly garden. The Ivy Creek Foundation (ICF) in partnership with Jefferson Chapter members, Rivanna Master Naturalists and other Ivy Creek volunteers has taken on revitalizing the existing garden. There has been a garden here for over a decade: first as a native plant meadow garden put in by Jefferson Chapter volunteers and then as a more formal butterfly garden redesigned by volunteers from the Piedmont Garden Club and maintained by both the garden club and Piedmont Master Gardeners. Both gardens were hampered by the usual garden challenges of drought, herbivores, and constant maintenance needs.



With a new mission of establishing a native plant garden designed to attract pollinators and support ICF's educational goals, the front garden section was replanted this spring with plants purchased with a generous donation from a Jefferson Chapter member and plants donated by the Jefferson Chapter and members of the garden's oversight committee. Many volunteers have helped out in planning, planting, maintaining, and monitoring the garden. Butterfly-weed planted over a decade ago by the Jefferson Chapter continues to be the backbone of the garden. Several potentially invasive non-native plants have been removed; the remaining non-native plants will be removed before additional plantings are made this fall in the back and side garden sections. A small new garden section will be planted next spring to test the feasibility of an expansion to the other side of the paved trail.

Eventually, ICF would like to use the garden to educate the public about native plants and pollinators. While working in the garden, I have been surprised at the number of Ivy Creek visitors who make a beeline (pun intended!) for the butterfly garden and ask questions about native plants, gardening, butterflies, etc. The opportunity exists to show visitors that they can use native plants at home to attract and support pollinators and to create beautiful gardens in their own yards. If you would like to be involved in any way, please contact Tana Herndon at [tbherndon@gmail.com](mailto:tbherndon@gmail.com).

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## **Summer Board Meeting**

*--Mary Lee Epps*

In mid-July Jefferson Chapter Board members gathered at Marjie Giuliano's house for our annual pot-luck dinner and summer planning meeting. Our treasurer, Pat Willis, reported that as of June 30 our savings and checking accounts had a combined balance of approximately \$19,200 thanks to a very successful spring plant sale at which we grossed about \$6900. The plant sale is our main source of revenue for the year and we continue to benefit from the capable leadership of our plant sale chairman, Phil Stokes, and the hard work of many volunteers.

Pat also presented a proposed budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which the Board approved. In addition to our usual donations of \$1000 to Ivy Creek Natural Area, \$1000 to the Piedmont Landscape Assoc. for a speaker on native plants at their annual February workshop, and \$1800 for two scholarships to Nature Camp, we voted to donate \$1000 to the Blue Ridge PRISM, a regional partnership in invasive species management. I am happy to report that this was quite helpful in enabling them to successfully achieve their goal of raising the \$15,000 they needed in time to receive an additional \$30,000 in matching funds.

We agreed publicly to thank Tim Williams for volunteering to teach an eight-session Botany and Plant I.D. class this fall to be offered to members of Jefferson Chapter, Piedmont Master Gardeners, and Rivanna Master Naturalists. We also discussed Board member Tana Herndon's leadership in renewing Ivy Creek's butterfly garden. Tana announced that the group still needs a plan for the rear of the garden and would be grateful for design help. She is also hoping that members will volunteer to help maintain the garden. If you would like to help with either design or maintenance, please email Tana at [tbherndon@gmail.com](mailto:tbherndon@gmail.com).

Ruth Douglas will remain on the Board but is stepping down from her position as program chairman. Ruth has done a wonderful job of lining up able speakers on interesting topics and we thank her for all her hard work over the last few years. Kate Asquith, our newest Board member, has volunteered to take on the job. If you have any ideas for speakers or topics you would like to have covered, please email Kate at [kasquith@appalmad.org](mailto:kasquith@appalmad.org).



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## Native Plant Spotlight: Goldenrod

-- Kate Asquith



Goldenrod's tall, feathery plumes of yellow flower clusters are a staple of the Virginia landscape in late summer and early fall. Of the more than 100 species within the Goldenrod genus *Solidago*, at least 35 are found in Virginia. Most of the commonly grown species of the plant are characterized by large rigid columns of small yellow flowers growing in dense panicles at the ends of alternate-leaved stems.

The plant is a solid choice for any gardener in the region. Their long bloom period — August through November — provides lasting color and a focal point for a fall garden. They are also particularly tolerant of deer and clay soil, two of the greatest challenges for gardeners in this area.

The name comes from Latin “solidus,” meaning “to make whole,” referring to the plant's reputation for healing wounds. *Solidago* are sometimes incorrectly considered allergenic plants, likely due to their tendency to bloom brightly around the same time and places as ragweed (*Ambrosia*). In fact, unlike ragweed, goldenrod pollen is unlikely to flare allergies because it is too heavy to be airborne under ordinary circumstances.



Instead, goldenrod pollen is dispersed by the variety of insects it attracts. Goldenrods are butterfly magnets, hosting a wide range including Monarchs. Other insects such as bees, wasps, and beetles rely on goldenrod's fall blooms for the nectar and pollen they need to get through the winter. The plant also provides hibernacula for several species. Ecologists recommend home gardeners should not cut back their plant's stems until early spring, as overwintering insects will lay their eggs or develop pupae in the hollow stems of these plants.

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## Cowbane Prairie Natural Area Preserve

-- Tana Herndon



*Queen-of-the Prairie at Cowbane Prairie NAP in late June*

Queen-of-the-prairie, *Filipendula rubra*, is a spectacular native plant found in wet calcareous meadows in a few Virginia counties. A member of the Rose Family, queen-of-the-prairie blooms for a couple of weeks in June/July and its flower stalks can be over 5 feet tall. Determined this year to see blooms in a native habitat instead of in a garden, I visited Cowbane Prairie Natural Area Preserve (NAP)

(<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-area-preserves/cowbane>) in Augusta County. Even though this

preserve is public, visitors need to contact the steward before visiting.

Cowbane Prairie has no parking lot and no trail system but, if you can find the preserve and its wet prairie without trails or signs, it does have queen-of-the-prairie along with other plants uncommon and rare in Virginia. Vegetation surrounding queen-of-the-prairie was 4 to 5 feet tall by late June – maybe the reason why queen-of-the-prairie needs to send its flowers up high! Other meadow plants included blackberries, goldenrods, mountain-mints, Culver's-root, Blue vervain, New York ironweed and Joe-pye-weed. From a distance queen-of-the-prairie flowers resemble cotton candy. Up close, it was easy to see a resemblance of the individual flowers to spiraea, another member of the Rose Family. We did not venture farther than the edge of the wet prairie as it quickly became boggy enough to support cattails, arrowhead, buttonbush, and swamp rose.



*Field milkwort (Polygala sanguinea)*

The preserve also has a drier meadow. Part of this meadow is still being restored but on the walk along the edge we found Field milkwort (*Polygala sanguinea*) and lots of Rose-pinks (*Sabatia angularis*). The field edge was covered with rudbeckias, mountain-mints, asters, and not-yet-blooming goldenrods.

Queen-of-the-prairie plants have been offered for sale during past years at the Jefferson Chapter plant sale. It can sometimes be aggressive in the garden. After having seen it in its natural habitat, I would be happy to have it spread in my garden! If you wish to visit Cowbane Prairie NAP, you should contact in advance the DCR Steward Adam Christie at 540-292-3265.



*First photo: Culver's root blooming amid Queen-of-the-Prairie at Cowbane Prairie NAP in early July*

*Second photo: Rose-pink (Sabatia angularis)*

*Third photo: Wet prairie at Cowbane Prairie NAP looking east towards Blue Ridge and South River*

## Plant Walks and other Events

### **Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup> - The Science, Practical and Ethical Aspects of Breeding Plants: Understanding the Controversies of GMO's (RSVP by September 1)**

*Invitation from Albemarle Master Gardeners to Rivanna Master Naturalists and VNPS members*

Erin Fegley, a PhD. candidate in Biology at UVA will present on the basics of plant breeding. Ms. Fegley taught Botany, including plant breeding, at Eastern North Carolina University. She has spoken and



published on the viability of a rare endemic thistle; non-target impacts of a biocontrol weevil; and host-parasite associations of mistletoe.

Ira Wallace will present on the practical and ethical aspects of plant breeding, and she will discuss the controversies surrounding GMO's. Ms. Wallace is a worker/owner of the Southern Exposure Seed Exchange which offers only open-pollinated heirloom and organic seeds. Southern Exposure supports sustainable home and market gardening, seed saving, and preserving heirloom varieties. She is a member of Acorn Community which farms over 60 acres of certified organic land in Central Virginia, which includes conducting variety trials for Southern Exposure Seed. You may read more about Southern Exposure's advocacy on protecting organic seeds at [www.Southernexposure.com](http://www.Southernexposure.com), click on Links.

Ms. Wallace is an organizer of the Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello. She publishes magazine articles, blogs and a book on heirloom vegetable gardening. She serves on the boards of the Organic Seed Alliance, the Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association and the Virginia Association for Biological Farming (VABF).

The program begins at 9:30AM at the County Office Building, 5th Street Extended. A light lunch will be served at 1:00. Please email Abigail Turner, [abturner709@hotmail.com](mailto:abturner709@hotmail.com), to reserve a seat, and tell us whether you wish to stay for lunch, by September 1.

**Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> – Native Plant Walk** (9 am to 11 am, Ivy Creek Natural Area)



Phil Stokes will lead a walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area searching out late summer wildflowers and fruits--asters, goldenrods, and thoroughworts should be blooming. With luck you may also see the small, uncommon October lady's tresses orchid (*Spiranthes ovalis*) and horsemint (*Monarda punctata*), in flower. We hope to see the fruits of spicebush, persimmon, and jack-in-the-pulpit, along with various nuts and seeds. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Free and open to the public.

**September 29-October 1<sup>st</sup> - Tri-State Native Plant Conference 2017** (SOLD OUT – there is a waiting list)

The Virginia Native Plant Society, the Maryland Native Plant Society, and the West Virginia Native Plant Society are joining together to host the 2017 Native Plant Conference at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV! For more information visit our state site at: <http://vnps.org/tri-state-native-plant-conference-2017/>

**Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup> – First Annual Ian Robertson Legacy Lectureship** (5pm to 9:30pm, White Hall Vineyards)

C. Colston Burrell, noted landscape designer, educator, award-winning author, photographer, and principle of Native Landscape Design and Restoration, will be the speaker. The evening will begin with a tour of the vineyards. Visit <https://mcintirebotanicalgarden.org/lecture/> or [friendsofianrobertson.com](http://friendsofianrobertson.com) for more information, or email [info@mcintirebotanicalgarden.org](mailto:info@mcintirebotanicalgarden.org).

**Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> - Garden Basics – Native Plants for the Home Garden** (2-4:00 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church, 1118 Preston Ave)

Hosted by Piedmont Master Gardeners - Get timely and useful advice on Native Plants for the Home Garden for greater gardening success from Dorothy Tompkins.

COST: FREE, but please register: call 434-872-4583 or send your contact information (name, address, phone number, and email address) and name of class (Garden Basics-Native Plants) to [info@piedmontmastergardeners.org](mailto:info@piedmontmastergardeners.org).

**Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup> – Native Plant Walk** (9 am to 11 am, Ivy Creek Natural Area)



Join Tony Russell for a leisurely walk exploring and reflecting on four different forest stands at Ivy Creek Natural Area. Be prepared for some up and downhill hiking, and be sure to gird yourself against ticks. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Free and open to the public.

**Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> – Native Plant Walk** (9 am to 11 am, Ivy Creek Natural Area)



Join native plant enthusiast Ruth Douglas as she leads this late fall walk, giving participants an opportunity to learn to recognize some of Ivy Creek's wildflowers in their winter form; there are a surprising number of herbaceous wildflowers that can be identified from their dry stems and leaves. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Free and open to the public.

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**Attracting American Goldfinches (Feeders not required)**

-- Betty Truax

One of the most rewarding experiences I have had in installing my newly planted cottage garden full of native plants has been watching American Goldfinches. They come in groups, gathering in nearby trees until one is brave enough to fly down into my garden. Others quickly follow. Trees and shrubs around my yard provide places for them to perch while assessing whether the garden is safe.

The goldfinches love drinking from my many bird baths, particularly one that I created with a cheap glass bowl and wine rack that is barely a foot off the ground. They visit it regularly often taking long drinks before getting down to the business of eating.

Goldfinches are exclusively seed eaters. Breeding occurs in late summer or early fall when seeds are plentiful and ripening. At the same time, the 'fluff' from milkweeds and thistles are developing which they use in their







*American Goldfinch on Wild Quinine*

*triloba*).

We had to take our feeders down for a while when a bear roamed our neighborhood but during that time goldfinches continued visiting my gardens. Now that the feeders are back up I rarely see goldfinches on them. They seem to prefer fresh garden seeds.



*Goldfinch on Wild Beebalm*

nests. They may add a few small aphids or caterpillars to the chicks' diet but goldfinches are one of the few birds that feed their young seeds.

It is fun to watch as goldfinches hang on to stems and twist and turn to get to seeds. They also have amazing balance to stay on top of seed heads even as they sway in the wind. So far this year in my garden, Goldfinches have been seen eating seeds of lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*), orange milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), wild bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), blazing star (*Liatris spicata*) and brown-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia*



*Goldfinch on Lanceleaf Coreopsis*

I'm sad to admit I do deadhead some my plants when they get a bit rough looking since my cottage garden is in my front yard. Luckily for me the plants seem to take turns ripening providing seamless access to seeds. I can't wait to put in my backyard gardens where I will add even more plants to their diet, can let the gardens be a tad wilder and hopefully keep those wonderful American Goldfinches happy!

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## Jefferson Chapter Newsletter

Submissions of articles, events, and other information of interest to the chapter are welcome. Feel free to submit them to: [jeffvnps@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvnps@gmail.com) . Put "Newsletter Editor" in the subject line please.